



The phenomena of interference of perceptive character in conditions of artificial bilingualism

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Abstract

The aims and objectives of the article are to observe the interference phenomena of perceptive character occurring in bilinguals' speech and to find out its reasons and the ways of improving such language deficiencies. By means of direct observation and interview methods bilingual individuals' mistakes in the oral and written English caused by the interlanguage and intralanguage phenomena of interference of the perceptive character were revealed. The key finding of the research of the interference of perceptive character is that wrong perception or absence of the foreign utterance perception interferes the process of communication and transmission of thoughts, information. The innovation of the research is first of all different approach to the study of bilingualism that is bilingualism in artificial, auditorium conditions. The theoretical value of the research is the perspectives of being used in the study of interference at other levels of the language apart from morphemic level. It can be useful for future research of the interference phenomena as well as from the point of view of methods of teaching English providing English teachers with theoretical data to be considered in teaching English to Azerbaijani students in conditions of artificial bilingualism.

Keywords: *bilingualism, bilingual individuals, interference of perceptive character, artificial bilingualism, morphemic interference.*

Every language has its own system in terms of pronunciation, morphology, lexis, syntax and stylistics. Once individuals, at least bilingual individuals get into a foreign language environment, specific psychological changes related to cognitive processes which are explained by psychological factors, take place in their language consciousness and in most cases result in interference phenomena caused by divergences between the language structures of the mother tongue and the target language. The interference phenomena might occur at different language levels, such as phonetic, morphemic, lexical, syntactical levels of the language. The phenomena of interference at the morphemic level of the language are in the spotlight of our research. We are making an attempt to study the phenomena of interference of perceptive character in conditions of artificial bilingualism.

Materials and methods

In our research we used direct observation and interview methods which give an opportunity to have a closer contact with the bilinguals who were being experimented and reveal their mistakes in the oral and written English caused by the interlanguage (divergences between the morphological system of the Azerbaijani and English languages) and intralanguage (confusion of the rules and language patterns within the English language)

phenomena of interference of the perceptive character. The experiment was done with the Azerbaijani students of the Education faculty of Azerbaijan University of Languages whose level of academic knowledge of English varied from Pre-Intermediate to Advanced levels, in correlation with the Common European Framework. The English level of the first year students coincided with Pre-Intermediate level, the second year – Intermediate, the third year – Upper-Intermediate and the fourth year – Advanced level associatively.

The method of interview, particularly one to one interview was helpful to investigate the Azerbaijani students' mistakes while using oral English and the deviations from the norm caused by the interference phenomena in bilinguals' speech. To check interference phenomena in students' written speech, we used essay writing task and the variety of grammatical activities considering students' potential mistakes caused by the interference phenomena.

About 120 students of Azerbaijan University of Languages with different levels of English participated in our experiment.

Discussion

As per Peter Trudgill (2001), individuals' view of the world may be determined by their native language.

So, native language is the basis, the foundation in the individuals' language consciousness which immensely affects the second language acquisition either positively or negatively depending on the degree of the kinship between the contacting languages. In case, the languages in contact are kindred languages, the perception of the target language is by far easier rather than in case of contacting languages having no genealogical kinship. For instance, an Azerbaijani student makes much less effort in learning Turkish or Uzbek languages rather than English or French. It is due to similarities and differences in the phonological, grammatical, lexical, syntactic structures of the languages in contact. Besides this fact, psychological aspect of learning a foreign language is of not less importance. Bilinguals, particularly in our study area, Azerbaijani bilinguals whose second language is English, encounter serious psychological complications in the perception of the English language which hardly has any coincidences with the Azerbaijani language in terms of the language structures.

Research done in the field of the first and second language acquisition proves that language learning is affected by internal and external factors of the learning process (Olguin K., Katiuska Vega Labra V., 2014, 11). According to P.H. Mathews (2003), the adults' speech changes depending on the environment where individuals use the language. From this point of view bilingualism in natural and arti-

cial conditions differ from each other. In our research we focus on bilingualism in artificial conditions, that is bilingualism in education, in the learning process. Although we investigated bilingualism among Azerbaijani students who are in the process of learning English, we can refer them to bilingual individuals since they can communicate and express themselves in English with more or less academic language competence. In our view students with relative command of English though not completely accurate in the target language can be considered bilingual individuals as it is hard to believe that bilinguals mastering the second language perfectly and impeccably, exist in reality. In that case students, at least those who study the English language for professional purposes (for instance, students of Education faculty of Azerbaijan University of Languages whose future career is teaching English professionally) purport to have the status of bilingual individuals.

Learning the second language implies both positive and negative effects on bilingual individuals' language consciousness. The positive effect of the second language acquisition on learners is the impact on their mental abilities that makes them more confident and satisfied with acquired skills of the new language. However, the second language acquisition entails such negative effect as the phenomena of interference at different language levels which is reflected in bilinguals'

deviations from the norms while speaking the foreign language.

Interference of perceptive character is directly related to psychological aspect of bilingualism which implies the Azerbaijani students' challenges with perception of the English language.

At Azerbaijan University of Languages, where the study of foreign languages (in our concrete case, the study of English) is realized in conditions of artificial bilingualism, from the initial stage of their study, students find out themselves in language environment at lectures and seminars in such major subjects as: Phonetics, Grammar, Practice of English and others. Teaching of the above-mentioned subjects is implemented directly in the English language that is extremely complicated for the students without preliminary experience of oral speech communication. In such cases while communicating in English the mother tongue in which students realize their thinking abilities that in many respects helps to translate thoughts from the native into the foreign language. Such kind of communication continues until the time when students master the language to the extent of thinking in it.

Surprisingly at the University of Oslo, Birgite Brok-Witney as a result of research dedicated to the role of education in the sphere of higher education in Africa, came to the conclusion that it is easier for learners to acquire foreign language skills if they are given in-

structions in their mother tongue even at higher levels of learning the language with the purpose of preserving their national culture and identity (Mother tongue and Bilingual Education., 2008). The author encourages teachers not to ignore the learners' national belonging and culture, also while teaching them a foreign language, to attach equal importance to their mother tongue. This significant factor should definitely be taken into consideration while studying the issues of the second language acquisition. As for the instructions, they can be given in learners' mother tongue in case it will not cause interference phenomena if not in bilinguals' speech, but in their consciousness.

While learning a foreign language in conditions of artificial bilingualism, mother tongue is completely ignored as in most cases classroom conditions are the only language atmosphere for learners. The majority of them are deprived of foreign language atmosphere and the opportunity of lively communication outside the English lesson.

Attending different kinds of conversation clubs, interactive games in English, everyday communication outside the lesson, participation in variety of international events where bilingual individuals feel more relaxed and independent from psychological point of view in comparison with learning environment, in many respects promote to improvement of bilinguals' speech skills as for comprehensive language

learning, only learning environment does not always give a desirable effect.

The interference of perceptive character implies wrong perception or the absence of the foreign utterance perception that interferes the process of communication and transmission of thoughts, information.

Azerbaijani students do not face with peculiar challenges related to understanding of phonemes similar to their native Azerbaijani language in auditory perception. The phonemes which are unique and characteristic only to English and do not have the equivalent or similar variant in Azerbaijani language create problems in reproduction, particularly Azerbaijani students' pronunciation of the English speech.

According to linguistic research the distinctive features of phonemes are not enough for perception of the foreign speech, to achieve this connection of the information in syllables is more important than in discrete units (phonemes).

If we approach this issue from the morphemic point of view, we can observe the similar phenomenon when bilinguals after the perception of the English speech in the given tasks make mistakes in morphemes either identifying them with the morphemes in the native Azerbaijani language or use the incorrect forms applying English grammar rules in the wrong situations.

The results of the conducted experiment are demonstrated in the below table:
Table 1

For instance, in our experiment the Azerbaijani students were offered to listen to the authentic audio material in order to observe the phenomenon of morphemic interference of perceptive character in their speech that is from the point of view of their perception of the foreign speech by listening. The audio material was voiced by the British, native speakers of English. After listening the Azerbaijani students were offered the following tasks:

to convey the main idea of the listened material briefly;

to fill in the gaps with prepositions in the sentences where necessary;

The experiment was conducted in three groups:

with Upper-Intermediate and Advanced levels;

Intermediate level;

Pre-Intermediate level with participation of the first, second, third, fourth year students.

50% of the students coped with the given tasks successfully, 30% of the experimented students partially completed the task, in transmission of the main idea of the audio material they used incorrect verb forms, making interference mistakes in tense forms, in plural forms of nouns and in the usage of prepositions which do not have direct parallels in the Azerbaijani language, while 20% of the students absolutely failed to do the task.

| Groups of students where the experiment was conducted | Successfully coped with the task | Partially coped with the task | Absolutely failed to do the task |
|--|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Upper-Intermediate advanced, intermediate, pre-intermediate levels | 50% | 30% | 20% |

It is not doubtful that this significant role in our experiment belongs to the students' level of English. The first group of students half of which coped with the given task successfully consisted of Upper-Intermediate and Advanced level students, the second group, partially coped with the task belonged to intermediate level, the third group of the experimented participants, half of which made interference mistakes at the morphemic level were first year students with pre-intermediate level of English.

Evidently, half of the experimented students coped with the task having demonstrated effective listening skills. The students who partially completed the task and 20% of the students who absolutely failed to do the task need additional practice of the listening materials voiced exclusively by native speakers of English; they also need verbal explanations of the potential interference phenomena and additional practice in doing exercises for preventing occurring mistakes.

Based on comparative- typological research of Azerbaijani and English languages Azerbaijani linguists

D.Yunusov and L.Khanbutayeva (2008, 209) analyzed the mistakes made by Azerbaijani students while studying English and subdivided them into two groups:

occasional mistakes occurring to incomplete elaboration of the current and covered material which does not have a fundamental character and which are possible to eliminate applying special methodology and additional exercises;

frequently occurred mistakes typical of the majority of biligual individuals.

A foreign language teacher's awareness of reasons and prime causes of the mistakes in students' speech noticeably facilitates and makes it more convenient to eliminate from the students' speech and to a certain extent prevent them.

In the study of bilingualism in bilingual individuals' speech we observed the tendency to using more simplified structures and models of the second language, avoiding those specific phenomena distinguishing it from the mother tongue and create certain difficulties in understanding and using the target language.

Especially in the process of the speech activity bilingual individuals try not to complicate themselves with comparatively unfamiliar and alien for their language consciousness, forms and constructions, and choose those grammatical forms and constructions which to some extent have similarities to their mother tongue or those which are adequate with the linguistic system of their mother tongue.

According to U.Wainriech (2011,42), "it is significant that in interference of the two grammatical models, usually the sample for imitation is the one which uses in its paradigm relatively independent and invariant models – we can say a clearer scheme". The idea that U.Wainriech claims is the fact, the reality. To what extent it is effective in conditions of bilingualism for the formation of bilingual individuals' proper speech skills?

From one point of view bilingual individuals' refusal from using alien grammatical and word forming morphemes of the foreign language significantly alleviates their perception of the second language, accelerates the process of learning and communicating in the target language. From another point of view while learning the language at the academic level the above-mentioned reason impedes the effective perception of the language as more or less complicated grammatical categories of the foreign language are simply ignored and substituted by the simple ones, which are accessible enough for bilinguals. It is necessary to

mention the fact that this process is observed particularly at morphological and syntactical levels in language contacts since the field of grammar is the sphere of language where bilinguals mostly find out juxtapositions and compare with the system of the mother tongue.

Deviations from the norms of correct usage are also observed in using exclusions from interlanguage rules of the target language. Bilingual individuals mostly strive for using those grammatical forms which are formed according to standard rules being challenged in the proper usage of exclusions. For instance, such mistakes of Azerbaijani students as incorrect usage of irregular plural nouns – «foots» instead of «feet», «mouses» instead of «mice», «putted» instead of «put», etc. In the shown cases bilinguals automatically focus formal meanings of the words in use, "the meanings of paradigmatic relations to which morphological ways –affixation and other points", not taking into consideration special cases of the variation of root morphemes changing in the aspect of expression (Широков О.С., 1985, 222). The experiments for identifying the interference of perceptive character also show that in perception of the foreign language grammatical system, particularly, morphological structure of the English language, the comparison of the morphemes in Azerbaijani and English languages directly take place in bilinguals' (in our case Azerbaijani students') mind and

under the influence of the system of the mother tongue the structure of the target language (the English language) is distorted. The essential task for those who teach the language is to alleviate the transition process from the system of the mother tongue to the system of the foreign language for learners taking into consideration discrepancies in grammatical structures of contacting languages before bilingual individuals perceive the language.

Both effective methodological exercises and data of the comparative grammar of Azerbaijani and English languages can be useful in this sphere.

As it was mentioned above, the mother tongue plays the key role in second language acquisition. The problem of the extent of the second language perception activeness by bilinguals and the degree of their perception of similar or strongly contrastive language phenomena characteristic to the target language need special linguistic investigation. Depending on this factor and individual characteristics of a foreign language perception by bilingual individuals of different age groups the level of mastering a foreign language by bilinguals and their language competence will be defined.

Findings

In the process of investigation of interference of perceptive character we can convince that the influence of the first language skills can be either neg-

ative, causing rude phonetic, grammatical, lexic-semantic and syntactical mistakes, or positive, promoting to overcoming challenges in mastering the second language due to similar structural features between the mother tongue and the target language. From this point of view in the process of perception and mastering a foreign language the phenomena of interference not only at morphemic, but also at other levels of the language must be taken into consideration and based on the results of the interference research it is necessary to compile effective language exercises for appropriate audience. Certainly, the theory of language is directly reflected in its practical usage and many theoretical issues are solved precisely in the process of realization of speech activity.

The results of the theoretical and experimental research promote to profound and comprehensive development of not only Linguistics, but also other scientific disciplines related to Linguistics.

While learning a language, cognitive processes studied in Cognitivism which focuses on the problems of Psychology, Linguistics, Philosophy, Neuroscience and the study of artificial intellect, play an essential role in a bilingual's mind. In the process of language perception, learning its rules and norms definite speech production strategies are realized (Резвина О.Г., 2006, 11). The principle of these strategies is that a foreign language perception except theoretical study of the

language takes place by means of memorizing concrete speech utterances during speech production that is perception of the language in practice. Interference phenomena in such cases are minimized and can happen if a bilingual individual has problems with memory. Consequently, in the research of interference of perceptive character memory is one of the most important psychological factors in the second language acquisition. Bilinguals with comparatively effective ability to memorise perceived speech utterances succeed in language learning more often than those whose memory is trained weaker.

Except the above-mentioned factors in the study of interference of perceptive character bilinguals' physiological features related to the process of the foreign language perception which are unique and individual for every bilingual, have great significance.

Speaking about the perceptive character of interference we imply oral perception of English morphemes by Azerbaijani students as well as their oral and written reproduction in bilinguals' speech. The results of experimental research showed that the phenomenon of one and the same interference type, in our particular case- morphemic interference is manifested in unequal degree among Azerbaijani students with similar level of academic knowledge of English. This fact certifies that while learning a foreign language for prevention of interference phenomena bilinguals' individual lan-

guage skills in the sphere of pronunciation, grammar, lexis, ability to communicate fluently as well as motivation, individual attitude to the target language and learners' emotional state should be taken into consideration. The learners' individual state is a crucial factor in the manifestation of interference in bilinguals' speech. Preconception in the wrong production of the foreign speech and fear of negative assessment by the teacher who masters the foreign language fluently as well as the peers who more or less effectively speak the target language is observed among the learners.

Such foreign linguists as D.J.Young (1991, 426-437) and M.Price (Price M.L. , Young D.J., 1991, 101-108) assert that psychological fear of making a mistake in speech in many cases causes the fact that such psychologically vulnerable students are practically inactive at the lessons of the foreign language. Similar research was done by the Turkish linguists N.Dalkilich (2001, 382-388), Kh.Ozturk and S.Chechen (2007, 218-236) and others who can see the link between students' performance and their fear of making speech mistakes.

In our experience while perceiving the English language by the Azerbaijani students besides the above-mentioned strenuous psychological factors causing the interference phenomenon, in some cases of even practical inactiveness during the lessons the influence of current assessment of their speech skills which they receive

as a result of their performance is also observed. This psychological pressure is directly reflected on some learners' language performance and academic progress.

The above-mentioned situations can be prevented with the help of quite experienced and trained in correlation with the appropriate methodology teachers who teach the foreign language focusing not only on the study of the concrete language material, but also on the ways of mastering a foreign language that would promote to further development and maintaining the learners' language level, since the language is a comprehensive phenomenon and its perfect mastering is the issue of time which is sometimes not limited to a definite academic program or standards.

Conclusion

The current research of interference phenomena of perceptive character in conditions of artificial bilingualism revealed variety of factors affecting the second language acquisition which undoubtedly should be taken into consideration both by linguists in theoretical linguistic research and in Linguodidactics.

Bilingualism is a multifaceted sociolinguistic phenomenon which comprises linguistic, social, psychological and educative aspects. Bilingualism has both positive and negative effects on bilingual individuals. The positive effect is reflected in bilinguals' mental and emotional state promoting to their confidence and satisfaction by master-

ing the skills of the second language. The negative effect entails the challenges of learning the second language reflected in the phenomena of interference.

The current research differs from others in terms of bilingualism conditions. Apart from natural bilingualism, we investigated artificial bilingualism in English language auditorium conditions where the interference phenomena are more frequent rather than in conditions of natural bilingualism. We assume that students who study the English language professionally (for instance, students of Education faculty of Azerbaijan University of Languages whose future career is teaching English professionally) can be considered bilingual individuals.

As a result of the study of interference phenomena of perceptive character in the Azerbaijani students' English oral and written speech the role of the mother tongue is identified.

The following factors affect the interference phenomena in conditions of artificial bilingualism:

- degree of genealogical kinship between the languages in contact;
- unavoidable effect of bilinguals' mother tongue;
- learners' deliberate usage of less complicated, simplified grammatical forms rather than complicated ones;
- learners' individual skills of language perception, that is, memory;
- learners' psychological features, that is, fear of making mistakes;

current assessment of their language skills.

The experiment done with the Azerbaijani students whose level of English varied from Pre-Intermediate to Advanced showed how successfully the students coped with the given tasks which aimed at revealing the phenomena of interference at the morphemic level of the language and the students' performance proved that those who were at lower levels com-

pletely failed to accomplish the tasks and therefore need more listening practice voiced exclusively by native speakers of English; at the same time the students with poor performance and rude interference mistakes need verbal explanations of the potential interference phenomena and additional practice in doing exercises for preventing the deviations from the norm.

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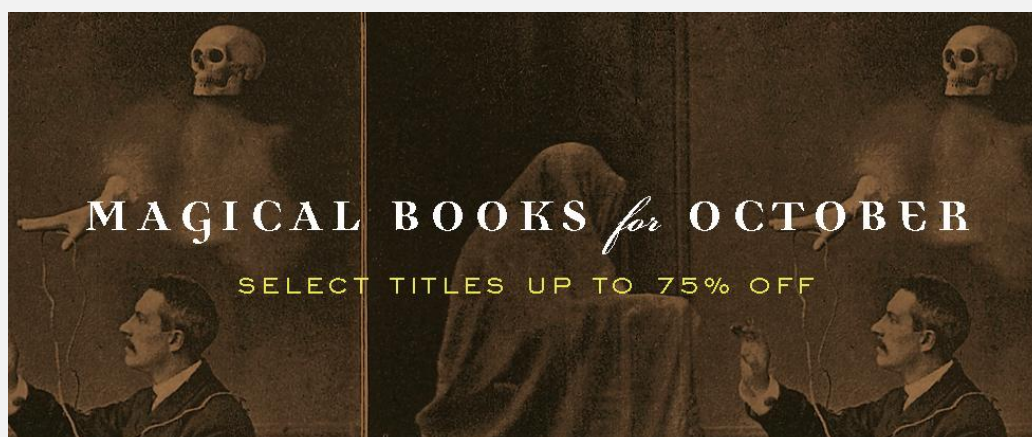
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